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New York

President:	Mr. Pleuger	(Germany)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

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04-29919 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, India, Ireland and Japan in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and a briefing by the representative of Germany.

I now give the floor to Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno: In the light of the very successful conference on Afghanistan held last week in Berlin, it is fitting that the Security Council should take stock of what was achieved at the conference and what now lies before us in terms of capitalizing on the momentum gained in Berlin to complete the Bonn process successfully.

First, let me reiterate our deep thanks to the German Government for the outstanding preparation and organization that went into the holding of the conference. The leadership of the German Government in putting the conference together was absolutely critical to its success. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Jean Arnault, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and we in the Secretariat are extremely grateful for the very effective collaboration that we enjoyed with our co-Chairs — the Afghan Government, Germany and Japan — at all levels.

The achievements of the conference are numerous, and I do not want to steal the thunder of the Permanent Representative of Germany by detailing them all. However, I believe that the conference reasserted the unity of purpose and long-term commitment that have been a hallmark of the international community's engagement in Afghanistan. The presence in Berlin of some 25 ministers and numerous other high-ranking Government officials is a clear signal of the international community's continuing resolve to assist the Afghan Government and see the peace process through to its completion, to a point when peace and stability are firmly established and economic development is on track.

The Berlin declaration, adopted by the participants, provides a clear statement of vision for this remarkable partnership, and the proof of it was clearly offered by the very generous pledges that the Government received. The $4.4 billion committed for the current fiscal year was over 100 per cent of the amount that had been sought, and the $8.2 billion committed for three years represented 69 per cent of the funds requested for that period by the Ministry of Finance. Above all, that generosity suggests a level of continuing donor confidence in Afghanistan that is a credit to President Karzai's leadership and his Government's effective handling of the funds committed so far.

The conference also approved a comprehensive work plan, annexed to the declaration, providing us all with a blueprint for international cooperation with the Afghan Government. The work plan, endorsed by the

Afghan Cabinet, provides clear benchmarks and targets to be met in the political, security and economic spheres over the coming months and years.

Also agreed in Berlin was a strong framework for regional cooperation in countering narcotics by Afghanistan and its neighbours. That agreement expresses the resolve of the region to combat the terrible threat that drug trafficking poses to Afghanistan, its neighbours and the world beyond.

In the margins of the intergovernmental conference, two other important meetings were held. A meeting of Afghan civil society members provided a set of useful recommendations to the Afghan Government. A donor meeting for the elections was also held at which donors provided pledges of some $68 million, against the needs of some $135 million, for the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in September in Afghanistan and for the refugee communities in Pakistan and Iran. This result is significant in that it provides sufficient funds for critical start-up costs and procurement for electoral activities. The importance of raising the remaining funds required should not be underestimated, however. We hope that this early generosity also implies that donors recognize that the rest of the funding must be found soon if the tight electoral time frames are to be met.

The achievements that I have mentioned are truly impressive. However, their full impact will be felt only if we capitalize on the momentum of Berlin to ensure that the peace process receives the support it needs.

The tasks still facing Afghanistan remain daunting. I will not elaborate here on the huge challenges on the reconstruction and development front, except to stress, as some of my colleagues did in Berlin, that the ambitious level of growth and assistance sought by the Afghan Government would still deliver a per capita income of only $500 by 2015. That is a clear reminder of how far Afghanistan has to go, of how important the timely disbursement of pledges can be, and of the amount of work that the Afghan Government must do to ensure that even those very meagre expectations of a peace dividend are met.

The conference also highlighted the challenge of combating what the Secretary-General has called the rising tide of the drugs economy. Opium production in Afghanistan in 2003, estimated at 3,600 tonnes produced on 80,000 hectares, will represent a further increase above the already high 2002 figure — a figure that generated an income equivalent to over half of Afghanistan's national income. Turning back this tide will take a concerted effort, as well as patience, but the immediate efforts of the Afghan Government on the eradication front must also be supported.

While not downplaying the importance of those challenges, I would nevertheless like to stress here the very pressing, short-term demands that now face the country if Afghanistan is to achieve the next stage of the Bonn process — that is, national elections. As Mr. Arnault said in Berlin, the response to the registration process so far provides evidence of the Afghans' strong desire to participate in the political process.

In the work plan annexed to the Berlin declaration, the Government has agreed to take a number of steps to help ensure freedom of expression and political organization, a level playing field for political parties and their candidates, a neutral civil service and military, freedom of the press and equal access to it. At the request of the Government of Afghanistan, we are prepared, jointly with the Afghan Human Rights Commission, to monitor closely the implementation of political rights across the country in the hope that this will increase opportunities and incentives to achieve these benchmarks.

However, the vast majority of Afghans remain convinced, above all, that elections require prior disarmament. The fighting that broke out in Herat two weeks ago underscores the threat that factional rivalries pose to the exercise of credible, free and fair elections. If factional military forces continue to be a dominating feature of the political scene, they are bound to curtail the political liberties necessary for truly civilian politics and a credible election. They must not be allowed to do so.

(*spoke in French*)

Without substantial improvements in the security situation, the elections will be threatened. The work plan provides for the intensification of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts to encompass 40 per cent of current militia and the cantonment of all heavy weapons by this June. Success in DDR programmes will depend to a great degree on the leadership of the Afghan Government. It is now absolutely vital that that goal be achieved. This has indeed been a long-standing priority project, and

progress made towards its achievement will boost the Government's authority and legitimacy and that of all political leaders who have committed themselves to its success. This disarmament process will also be in keeping with the legal requirements of the new political party law, which mandates the clear separation of political formations from their military wings as a precondition for their participation in the electoral process.

In that context, I would like once again to underscore the need for adequate international security assistance to support the efforts of the Afghan Government in the electoral process and to protect that process from both factional threats and attempts to simply terminate it. The Afghan national army will be able, we all hope, to become actively involved in deterring all factional violence, as it is doing now in Herat, and to ensure the monitoring of heavy weapons cantonment, as it is doing today in Mazar-e-Sharif.

By June the newly trained units of the Ministry of the Interior could be deployed in larger numbers to help create an environment that is more conducive to the free operation of parties and independent candidates. The provincial reconstruction teams are also expected to continue to play a positive role in facilitating DDR operations and deterring interference.

Nevertheless, the Afghan and international security forces currently deployed in Afghanistan have limited capacity, and they will be overextended if they have to assume the immense task of supporting a credible election process that is acceptable to all. Therefore, I wish to join the voice of the United Nations to President Karzai's recent appeal to NATO and the coalition to increase deployment of international forces in order to help the Afghan Government fulfil its commitment to hold free and fair elections. These elections will demonstrate the international community's solidarity, which thus far has been evident in support of Afghanistan. Let us not forget that we will judged by the quality of the outcome.

The President: I shall now make a statement on the outcome of the Berlin conference in my capacity as the representative of Germany. Please forgive me for taking the floor at the outset of this meeting, but we thought that, as representative of the host country, we would, from our point of view, familiarize members with the results of the Berlin conference, held last week from 31 March to 1 April.

Let me say first that I would like, on behalf of the delegation of Germany, to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his very comprehensive briefing, which I fully support, and for the kind words addressed to my Government. I also align myself with the statement of the presidency of the European Union, to be made later at this meeting by the permanent representative of Ireland.

The official title of the Berlin conference was "Afghanistan and the International Community — A Partnership for the Future". This title reflected accurately the central message of this conference. Further reconstruction of Afghanistan remains, after the conclusion of the Petersberg Process, a common endeavour of the international community and Afghanistan, under the auspices of the United Nations.

The presence at this event of 65 delegations, including all State members of the European Union, the Group of 8 (G-8) and NATO, as well as Afghanistan's neighbours and other particularly interested countries — many at the Foreign Minister level — underlined the continued international commitment to creating a secure, stable, free, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan.

At the same time, Afghanistan's ownership has clearly increased, as demonstrated not only by the Afghan role as co-host and co-chair of the conference, but also by Afghanistan's input and extensive commitments, announced by President Karzai in his opening speech, as he himself was leading the Afghan delegation.

The Berlin conference produced specific and measurable results that exceeded even optimistic expectations.

The documents that I am quoting from right now are available outside this Chamber for all interested members to review. The extensive final documents describe in detail the path ahead. The Berlin declaration, as the final communiqué of the conference, describes the vision of the future new Afghanistan; the work plan, drawn up by the Afghan Government, shows how Afghanistan wants to approach that vision in the coming two years, while the progress report endorsed by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) summarizes the

implementation status of the Bonn Agreement. Lastly, the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics is an agreement between Afghanistan and its neighbours, which is not only a major contribution to combating narcotics, but is also a further boost to viable regional cooperation after years of isolation of Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government has established a timetable for the next steps in the political transition process. President Karzai announced at the conference that parallel elections for the presidency as well as for the lower house of parliament will be held in September.

At the same time, the Afghanistan Government committed itself to an ambitious timetable for the disarmament of militias, as a significant condition for free and fair elections. In return, financing for the elections was largely secured through a separate pledging by the major donors. The Afghan Government presented a detailed programme of work — the so-called work plan — that contains mainly short-term, one- to two-year goals — for the institution-building and development processes that are concretely verifiable. This was Afghanistan's major political contribution to the conference.

The Berlin conference was also successful from the pledging perspective. The international donor community made pledges for Afghanistan totalling $8.2 billion for the next three years, the period ranging from 2004 to 2006, of which $4.4 billion is earmarked for the current Afghan fiscal year. Major pledges were announced, among many others, by the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, the European Commission, India and Canada, to mention only a few.

The long-term investment programme put forth by the Afghan Government under the title "Securing Afghanistan's Future", which has calculated a need for $28 billion in foreign aid for a period of seven years, is thereby fully financed for Afghanistan's current fiscal year. As set out in the Berlin declaration, the further implementation of this investment programme will depend on achieving the objectives set by the Afghan Government itself. I fully agree with what Mr. Guéhenno has said, that the further needs should not be underestimated and that if we want to meet them, the continued commitment of the international donor community will be required.

Concerning the provision of security, all participants at the conference appreciated the role of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom. Both ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom are ready to assist in securing the forthcoming elections. The prominent role played by NATO in Afghanistan was underlined by the participation of its Secretary-General at the conference. In the Berlin declaration, NATO has committed itself to the establishment of five additional provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) by this summer and further PRTs thereafter.

The conference showed universal concern over the narcotics situation, which threatens to jeopardize all that has been achieved in Afghanistan since 2001. The re-entrenchment of narcotics production and trafficking and the involvement of warlords and terrorist structures are worrying. The Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics, mediated by the United Kingdom as the lead nation for counter-narcotics and signed during the conference by Afghanistan and its seven neighbours, is an important advance in this context. The relevant parts of the work plan likewise underscore Afghanistan's determination to combat narcotics by all available means.

Last, but not least, a wide range of satellite events accompanied the conference, complementing it and rounding it off thematically. The German Foreign Office supported a conference with actors from Afghan civil society, which the Friedrich Ebert Foundation — a German think-tank — and Swiss Peace had arranged. An investors' conference was organized by the Federation of German Industries and attended by President Karzai. And a G-8 security working group meetings discussed the details of security sector reform on the basis of a comprehensive paper and of presentations by the five lead nations.

We are confident that the Berlin conference will be regarded as a milestone in the political and economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. And beyond that, we are convinced that the reaffirmation of a lasting partnership between Afghanistan and the international community reflects a promising model for a common endeavour of the international community in nation-building and in its fight against terrorism.

These remarkable results deserve an explicit acknowledgement and endorsement by the Security Council. To this end, my delegation initiated negotiations with Council members and with members of a core group of particularly interested States, with a

view to agreeing on the content of a presidential statement.

It is my understanding that such an agreement among experts has been reached and that we are going to adopt this presidential statement at the end of this public meeting. I would like to thank all partners for their cooperation during the preparations for the conference and in the course of the conference itself, as well as in the follow-up here in New York. Germany would like to specifically express its gratitude for the efforts by the other three co-chairs of the Berlin conference — the United Nations, the Government of Afghanistan and Japan.

I shall now resume my function as President of the Council.

Since there is no list of speakers for this meeting, I would like to invite Council members who wish to take the floor to do so, after having indicated to the secretariat, as from now, that they wish to speak. I shall now give the floor to those who have indicated their wish to speak.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his very informative update. My delegation is also grateful to you, Sir, for sharing with the members of the Council your views on the encouraging results of the Berlin international conference, held from 31 March to 1 April 2004. I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Ambassador Pleuger, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council during the month of April. In addition, I extend compliments to Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sablière, for successfully conducting our work during the very cumbersome month of March.

Brazil commends Germany and Afghanistan, as co-sponsor countries, and also the other co-chairs for their work in creating a privileged opportunity to discuss the next steps in the effort of reconstruction. We are heartened by the remarkable results reached in Berlin. The pledged contributions of $8.2 billion over three years are a very positive sign of renewed commitment by the international community to Afghanistan. The amount of announced funds should prove to be decisive for the effort of rebuilding the country's economy and infrastructure.

The international community is being matched by the Transitional Authority's serious and tireless work. In this context, the importance of the work plan presented in Berlin by President Karzai cannot be overemphasized. It lays down a comprehensive set of objectives that will guide Government action in key areas, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, combat against drugs, as well as voter registration.

The international community must do its best to support Mr. Karzai and his Government in implementing the plan. Brazil welcomes the announcement made by President Karzai to hold nationwide elections next September. Truly representative and credible elections in Afghanistan are essential for building a democratic, participative society. We believe that the work plan of the Afghan Government very rightly focuses not only on the holding of the elections, but also on issues such as security, free exercise of political rights, civic education and logistics, which are correctly perceived as fundamental for creating political and security conditions conducive to free and fair elections.

The expansion of peacekeeping forces throughout Afghanistan will bolster security in the country. Expansion on the ground is critical to halt deterioration of the overall situation and prevent the recurrence of recent violent incidents. Enhanced security is not only a requirement for the success of reconstruction efforts, but also a precondition for democratic, fair and peaceful elections in September. We welcome in particular the announced deployment of additional provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), which will play a vital role in improving security and rebuilding infrastructure in the most distant regions of the country, as well as in ensuring the safe conduct of the electoral process. We expect that the new PRTs will soon be operative, providing help where it is most needed.

Afghan stability remains seriously threatened by activities related to the drug trade. The threat is aggravated by the illegal association of drug producers and traffickers to warlords and terrorists, all of whom contribute to undermine international efforts for stabilization. We note with satisfaction that the Afghan Government proposes integrated strategies to tackle this complex problem based on combating drug-related organized crime, the promotion of alternative livelihoods, the reduction of demand and the strengthening of the rule of law.

The Berlin counter-narcotics declaration marked the confirmation and strengthening of the agreement of

Afghanistan and its neighbours — China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — to work together in the fight against drug trafficking. We note in this context the convening of the conference on regional police cooperation, to be held in Doha next May. We expect that, with tighter border controls and improved information exchange provided by the renewed alliance, Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries will be better equipped to face the challenge of eliminating the illicit drug trade and production.

The Berlin conference was a very successful step forward. It reaffirmed the strong commitment of the international community to helping the Afghan people to rebuild their nation. We hope that, in the coming months, that extraordinary diplomatic achievement will be translated into the concrete improvement of the situation of that struggling nation.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): Let me begin by thanking the German Government and the other organizers for hosting the Berlin conference on Afghanistan. It was, obviously, as we have heard today, a very successful event and succeeded in renewing the international community's commitment to the principles put forth in the Bonn Agreement. I want to join other colleagues in thanking you, Sir, and Mr. Guéhenno for your presentations this morning on the results.

The United Nations, the Afghan Government, the German Government and the donors are all to be congratulated on a Conference that raised significant financial contributions totalling $8.2 billion for the next three years, which will help us work to ensure — together with our Afghan friends — the future of a stable and democratic Afghanistan. We think that the international community's generosity in Berlin is a very hopeful sign for Afghans and for those in the international community who worry that interest is flagging and that donor fatigue is setting in. It is particularly noteworthy that the Afghan Government's needs for the coming fiscal year are fully covered and, also, that the Government of Afghanistan and its President played a full and important role in producing the results of Berlin. Those results show that there is a continuing resolve to pursue the partnership for the future that the organizers hoped to demonstrate.

We also note that the cost of election registration is now almost fully covered and that, on very short notice — indeed, on the spot — donors were able to raise $68 million towards the polling phase. We would urge the United Nations to work closely with the Afghan Government to identify ways to bring down the overall projected cost of polling, which is currently $135 million.

I thought I might say a brief word about security. United States and coalition forces are conducting reconstruction operations throughout Afghanistan and combat operations, as necessary, to target and destroy Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives in the region. Operations will continue in the region for the foreseeable future.

As a representative of the lead nation for the development of the Afghan National Army, I would like to update the Council on recent progress. As of early March, the Afghan National Army had a total operational strength of 7,600 troops, with another almost 1,700 troops in training, bringing the total force size to 9,300. Given that another 1,200 troops await training, we believe that we can reach the goal of a 10,000-member Afghan Army by the end of June. The growth rate in the past year has been strong — for example, the total force has been augmented by 4,600 troops in the last seven months — and attrition rates are also improving. During the period from November 2003 to February 2004, troop losses averaged just 2 to 3 per cent per month. Afghan Ministry of Defence leadership and ownership in the recruiting and retention process are producing positive results.

With regard to police, where we are co-lead nation with Germany, we are on track to reach the goal of having trained and equipped 20,000 police officers by June of this year. The United States portion of the programme has taken responsibility for building seven regional training centres for police, border police and highway patrol in seven key cities. This programme has already completed the rebuilding of the Kabul training facility, and other regional training centres in Gardez, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar and Kunduz are operational and at their capacity of 1,000 students each. The training centre in Jalalabad just expanded capacity and two other training centres in Herat and Bamiyan are under construction.

The United States has now established nine provincial reconstruction teams of the 12 that are in the

country. Our objective in creating these teams is to enhance stability, extend the reach of the central Government and help facilitate reconstruction in the provinces. I would note that the provincial reconstruction team in Herat, following the recent murder of the Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism, provided shelter to German officials and assisted in the deployment of the Afghan National Army. We have indications that the teams are increasingly popular, not only with the leadership of the Transitional Administration, but also with the Afghan citizens to whom they provide much-needed security and reconstruction. We, of course, join others in supporting calls for the establishment of additional such teams.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also thank Ambassador De La Sablière and the French mission for their outstanding work during their presidency last month.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and you for your briefings on the Berlin conference on Afghanistan. The conference was undoubtedly very important and achieved highly significant and commendable results. The Berlin declaration and its annexes, adopted at the conference, embody the firm commitment of the Afghan transitional Government and the Afghan people to making their country into one of peace, stability and development. The declaration also solidified the commitment of the international community to supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan and will surely have a very profound impact on the future of that country.

In the two years since the signing of the Bonn Agreement, the peace process in Afghanistan has made positive progress evident to all. The process is currently at a crucial stage. We welcome the intention of the transitional Government of Afghanistan to hold presidential and legislative elections this September. It is our hope that, through free and fair elections, a broad-based, representative Government capable of addressing all ethnic interests can be established. That will have a significant impact on the achievement of the goals set out in the Bonn Agreement.

We support the ongoing adoption by the Afghanistan Government of measures aimed at improving the security situation, accelerating security reform, promoting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and strengthening the legal system. We sincerely hope that all the ethnic groups and factions in Afghanistan can continue to give priority to the overall interests of the nation and to strengthening the unity and the joint efforts to build an attractive future for Afghanistan.

Peace and development cannot be achieved in Afghanistan without the support and help of the international community. We appreciate and support the important roles of the United Nations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. In order to promote the ongoing development of the Afghan peace process, and especially to ensure the successful conduct of general elections in Afghanistan, we believe that the international community should carry out the commitments it made at the Berlin conference as soon as possible. First, it should strengthen assistance to security in Afghanistan. In that context, we hope that the International Security Assistance Force can expand the scope of its deployment as soon as possible and establish new provincial reconstruction teams. Secondly, donors should earnestly and promptly provide the relevant economic and financial assistance. Thirdly, the international community should further support and cooperate with the counter-narcotics efforts the Afghan Government is making.

China, as a friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, has always supported and attached importance to the peace process in Afghanistan. In 2002, the Chinese Government pledged $150 million in assistance to Afghanistan over 5 years. So far, $47 million has been provided. At the Berlin conference, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing announced that China would provide $15 million in assistance to Afghanistan this year, provide $1 million in emergency material assistance for the Afghan general elections and cancel all loans to the Afghan Government that are now due. China would like to cooperate with Afghanistan in the fields of infrastructure, trade, investment, human resources and police training. At the conference, China, along with six other countries of our region, signed the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics, within the framework of the Kabul Declaration on Good-neighbourly Relations.

China will join the international community in the ongoing active efforts to achieve long-term order and stability in Afghanistan.

The President: I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to my delegation and my Government.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on Germany's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month, a month in which we will consider issues of vital importance to the international community. We would also like to express our high appreciation to Ambassador De La Sablière and the French delegation for the exemplary manner in which France conducted the presidency of the Council last month.

As we consider the results of the Berlin conference, we would first like to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his very comprehensive, cogent and persuasive briefing to the Council this morning. We would also like to thank the German Government for hosting last week's conference, together with Afghanistan, Japan and the United Nations. Your own statement to the Council, Sir, has outlined the major achievements at Berlin. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan participated actively in the Berlin conference, and we are most satisfied with its outcome.

Pakistan has an abiding interest in the early return of peace and stability in Afghanistan. We are linked to Afghanistan by history, geography and faith, and we believe that we share a common destiny. We therefore fully subscribe to the aspirations of the Afghan Government and President Karzai for peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and its neighbourhood.

The Berlin conference reaffirmed the commitment of participants to rebuilding and reforming the political, social and economic structures of Afghanistan, with the aim of creating lasting peace, stability and economic development and with a view to offering all Afghans, in an equitable manner, tangible prospects for a brighter future. The process that was initiated at Bonn will now continue beyond the present transition process in Afghanistan through to a lasting partnership between Afghanistan and the international community.

While security is ultimately the responsibility of the Afghans themselves, it cannot be achieved in the immediate future without the active military and political support of the international community. We therefore endorse the commitment in the Berlin declaration to the continuation of international military assistance until such time as the new Afghan security forces are sufficiently constituted and operational. We are also pleased with the decision by NATO, as mentioned in the Berlin declaration, to expand the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by establishing additional provincial reconstruction teams. We endorse providing additional such teams. However, we continue to encourage a larger presence of, and direct role for, ISAF in Afghanistan's security.

The Berlin declaration also stresses the need vigorously to implement the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, with the completion of its first phase by the end of June 2004. The work plan of the Afghan Government, endorsed by the Berlin conference, also provides the concrete steps that the Afghan Government will have to take not only with respect to DDR but also in terms of reforms in the Afghan national army and police and reforms in the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence and the National Directorate for Security that ensure national representation. Along with progress in extending the authority of the Afghan central Government, these are measures which deserve the continued involvement and support of the international community.

The Berlin declaration identifies drug production and trafficking as a serious threat to the rule of law and development in Afghanistan as well as to international security. The conference endorsed the concrete steps that the Afghan Government plans to take as part of its work plan for implementing its national drug control strategy. We also attach importance to the comprehensive Declaration on Counter-Narcotics signed in Berlin by Afghanistan and its six immediate neighbours. As one of the signatories, Pakistan looks forward to working with our partners to strengthen our collective efforts to control the drug menace. The drug problem in Afghanistan is not only an Afghan problem; it affects us all. It is therefore imperative that the Afghans and the international community — in the words of the Berlin declaration — "do everything — including the development of economic alternatives — to reduce and eventually eliminate this threat".

Pakistan has welcomed the decision by President Karzai to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in September this year. In its work plan the Afghan Government has welcomed the support of the

Governments of Pakistan and Iran to allow the participation of refugees in their countries in the elections. Pakistan has allocated $5 million for that purpose and is extending full cooperation to the Afghan authorities and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in this regard. We hope that the registration of voters will accurately reflect the ethnic and regional balance of Afghanistan's population and its ethnic mosaic. That is essential to the legitimacy and credibility of the entire election process.

Peace will not come to Afghanistan without development. This must remain the focus of the international community. We welcome the pledges made at Berlin for $8.2 billion in reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan over a three-year period. Afghanistan is a landlocked country, but it can also emerge as a transit route linking South Asia and Central Asia. It is therefore essential for Afghanistan's economic recovery and development to integrate this country with its two neighbouring regions. In that regard, we encourage the international community to support the construction of roads, as well as gas and oil pipelines and other trade links connecting Afghanistan with those two regions. Regional economic integration would mutually benefit Afghanistan and all its neighbours.

Pakistan has always supported, and continues to support and participate in, President Karzai's endeavour to build State institutions, which are an essential prerequisite for the success of the political and reconstruction processes in Afghanistan. Our participation in Berlin has been a strong testament to that commitment. We strongly urge the international community to continue to provide the necessary assistance to help the Afghan Government meet its goals, especially those outlined in its work plan.

Finally, we hope that the spirit of Berlin does not flag or diminish over time. Afghanistan will need years, if not decades, of political and economic support and engagement. Berlin is only the beginning of the post-Bonn process of the international community's commitment to Afghanistan. We who represent the international community here must now redouble our collective efforts and remain committed to peace, stability, reconstruction and development in Afghanistan in the long term.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to my delegation and to my Government.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sir, we are delighted to see you presiding over the Security Council this month. We are certain that, under your competent leadership, our work will be productive. We wish also to acknowledge the outstanding work done by Ambassador de la Sablière and his team in the context of France's presidency during the past month, which was very busy.

We wish also to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing. We thank you, too, Sir, for your briefing, which has made clear to us the main aspects of the Berlin conference for Afghanistan. We believe that the contents and the work plan of the Berlin declaration are clear guidelines for the reconstruction of an Afghanistan that is free, secure, stable, democratic and — we hope — prosperous.

We want to underscore the commitment of donors to provide $8.2 billion over the next three years, which will undoubtedly be vital in the context of efforts aimed at reconstruction and development in that country.

We value also NATO's commitment to expand the International Security Assistance Force through five provincial reconstruction teams, which will be deployed in various areas of Afghanistan in the coming months.

We know how critical the question of security is to the future of Afghanistan. We believe, therefore, that the participation of the countries of the region in the framework of the Kabul Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations of 22 December 2002, and in particular of the annexed Declaration on Counter-Narcotics, and the Doha Conference on Regional Police Cooperation represent a clear commitment to continue to strengthen regional cooperation.

We welcome the announcement of the holding of direct presidential and parliamentary elections in September of this year. As we said in the context of the most recent consultations of the Security Council, it is clear that a great deal remains to be done and that it is absolutely essential that there be a national electoral registration campaign, currently scheduled for May. We believe that the elections will represent a milestone in

the restoration of harmony and unity throughout the country.

In that context, we support the Afghan Government's work plan aimed at the success of the electoral process, the demobilization of at least 20 per cent of armed groups and the cantonment of weapons. The plan aims to ensure that the process continues to make progress beyond the forthcoming elections. We also agree that it is necessary to have the support of NATO and the Coalition in connection with security, with particular support for the work of the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army, on the basis of ethnic balance and respect for the rule of law.

We wish in particular to emphasize the determination expressed by the Afghan Government to continue to make progress in the implementation of its political programmes, in particular in the field of good governance and public administration, with a clear emphasis on anti-corruption policies; reform of the fiscal system; the promotion of private-sector participation; economic and social development, with special emphasis on overcoming poverty; the strengthening of the rule of law; and the promotion and protection of human rights.

We agree that an environment of security is essential to achieve progress in the areas of economic growth, political normalization, reconstruction and development. We believe also that drug production and trafficking poses a serious threat to the development and stability of Afghanistan. We agree that the Council must continue to support actions plans in this regard. We therefore support the contents of the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics.

Lastly, we support the presidential statement agreed upon by consensus by Council members, which, we hope, will be adopted at the conclusion of this meeting, as a sign of support for the political process in Afghanistan.

The President: I thank the representative of Chile for the kind words he addressed to me and to my Government.

Mr. Baali (Algeria): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to tell you how pleased I am to see you presiding over the Security Council and to express our gratitude to Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière and his team, whose work deserves recognition by the Council. Let me also thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his clear and comprehensive briefing and to thank you also, Sir, for the useful information you shared with us on the outcome of the Berlin conference. I wish also, through you, to commend the German Government and the Afghan Government as well as other sponsors of that conference, which from every standpoint, was a clear success.

The process established under the Bonn Agreement will be completed with the holding in September of the first free and democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. But there are many challenges to be met, in particular insecurity, which continues to prevail in certain regions of the country, and the increased production and trafficking of drugs, which poses a serious threat not only to respect to the rule of law in Afghanistan but also for the very development of that country.

The progress that has been made since the first Bonn Conference in December 2001 is nonetheless considerable. More than 3 million refugees have returned home, more than 4 million children have returned to school, women are returning to work, and a new Constitution was adopted earlier this year which provides in particular for gender equality.

The international conference on Afghanistan — whose outcome, declaration and work plan my country supports — has made it possible to assess the progress made, in the context of the political process that began in 2001, following the adoption of a new Constitution in January, and has provided a new opportunity for the international community to reiterate its commitment to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It has also allowed us to identify the necessary benchmarks for the international community's efforts by taking into account the current situation in Afghanistan in order to ensure its stabilization and its recovery.

The announcement of the additional pledges made by donors and the confirmation of contributions in the areas of security and of preparations for elections are vital for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

In this respect, we welcome Afghanistan's commitment to the implementation of a work plan aimed at establishing a State based on the rule of law that could operate autonomously through established democratic institutions. In this context, we also welcome the deployment of new Provincial Reconstruction Teams — the usefulness and importance of such teams has been fully

demonstrated — as well as the commitment of the President of Afghanistan to conclude the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The importance of that process is crucial for the holding of future elections.

The Afghan people and its leaders must work together to strengthen democratic institutions and to prepare for national elections. The commitment and constructive support of States neighbouring Afghanistan are also key factors in terms of the recovery of the country and of regional stability. Afghanistan will have to deal with a number of challenges in the future, and we hope that the assistance that has been pledged will be forthcoming so that security needs can be met and the recovery and reconstruction of the country can be ensured.

In this context, it is essential that the international commitment is strengthened, particularly in terms of security, including by deploying an international force throughout the country. Afghanistan more than ever needs the support of the international community.

In conclusion, we fully support the draft presidential statement, which reaffirms the commitment of the international community to the Afghan people.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his kind words addressed to me, my delegation and my Government.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): I warmly welcome you, Sir, and congratulate you and your country, Germany, on your assumption of the presidency. I also pay tribute to Ambassador de La Sablière and his team for the outstanding performance of their duties during France's presidency in the month of March.

I would like to join other delegations in thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his excellent opening briefing.

I would like to convey my gratitude and congratulations to the German Government for having organized, with dedication and great professionalism, the Berlin conference on Afghanistan. Our thanks also go to the co-Chairs of the meeting: the high-level representatives of Afghanistan, Japan and the United Nations.

Romania aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union. I would also like to make a few specific comments.

Let me begin by hailing the successful outcome of the Berlin conference. In Berlin, as, previously, in Bonn and Tokyo, the international community conveyed a strong message of commitment to and solidarity with a valued friend, Afghanistan. In Berlin, Afghanistan made clear its interest, ability and commitment to continue and successfully to complete its transition towards prosperity, stability and democracy.

The conference took place at a significant moment — only a few months before presidential and parliamentary elections. It was successful in providing a vision and an agenda for the future. It tailored a solid political, security and reconstruction framework to the expectations of the Afghan people.

Romania welcomes in particular the work plan adopted by the Afghan Government. The concrete steps envisaged in that respect should be regarded as part of a wider strategy of overall reform for Afghan society. If it is to be successful, the implementation of the work plan should evolve gradually into a useful, practical tool for the Afghan administration. We strongly encourage the Afghan authorities to closely monitor the implementation of the objectives and the observance of the deadlines that have been set. In this way, coordination among national institutions will be enhanced, self-assessment capabilities improved and the ability to match aspirations and resources increased.

With regard to drug trafficking in Afghanistan, Romania has stated repeatedly that counter-narcotics efforts at the national level should be accompanied by coordinated actions undertaken at the regional and even the global levels. The adoption by Afghanistan and its neighbours of the Declaration on Counter-Narcotics is therefore highly commendable.

Translating the Berlin declaration into tangible results requires not only steady political commitment but, equally, substantial financial support. In this context, we welcome the significant multi-year financial contributions pledged by international donors in Berlin.

It was with great pride that Romanian Foreign Minister, Mr. Mircea Geoana, reiterated, in Berlin,

Romania's commitment to a long-term, solid and multi-dimensional contribution to Afghanistan.

We are committed to the success of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. In our view, improving security remains the key prerequisite for the benchmarks ahead, including the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in September.

Romania will continue to demonstrate its commitment and cooperate with all the States participating in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan in order to reach the common goal of security and stability.

Additional military personnel will be deployed in Afghanistan as part of the reinforcement of our participation in the International Security Assistance Force. Romania will participate, starting this summer, with representatives in the Kunduz Provincial Reconstruction Team. We will continue to actively consider taking part in additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams. At the same time, Romania will continue contributing to the capacity-building of the national armed forces of Afghanistan.

In Berlin, Romania also stated its readiness to invest in the soft side of reconstruction — in areas capable of making a difference on the ground, such as institutional reconstruction, education, health and agriculture. Recently, Romania hosted an Afghan delegation in order to explore jointly additional means and areas of assistance and cooperation. We are determined to assist the Afghan authorities, together with other countries, in a matter of great concern — namely, fighting drug production and trafficking. To this effect, we are considering a pilot project aimed at providing Afghan farmers with alternative crops to the poppy fields.

Let me conclude by pointing out Romania's confidence in Afghanistan's future. The people and Government of Afghanistan must be proud of what they have accomplished so far. They should confidently look forward to the moment when their country will assume its rightful place among free, prosperous and democratic nations. The Berlin conference has succeeded in bringing that moment closer.

The President: I thank the representative of Romania for his kind words addressed to my delegation and my Government.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain)(*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I should also like to congratulate France for its work last month.

We are grateful to Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing and to you, Sir, for your briefing on the outcome of the Berlin conference.

Spain fully supports the statement to be made later by Ambassador Ryan on behalf of the European Union.

The conference that was held last week in Berlin helped us to assess the many achievements made since the Bonn conference and to prepare, together, for the major challenges ahead for Afghanistan. These include the holding of presidential and legislative elections next September; making the entire country secure by ending terrorism, factionalism in the provinces and the acts of violent opposition groups; ensuring the development and completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; combating drug production and trafficking; the development of the rule of law and of human rights; the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country; and the strengthening of cooperation with neighbouring States.

Spain is prepared to cooperate and to fulfil its commitments within the European Union and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). In this regard, Spain will soon be approximately doubling its contribution to ISAF through Euro Corps.

Finally, I wish to associate myself with previous speakers to indicate that we support the statement the President will be reading at the conclusion of this meeting.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): We join other members of the Council in congratulating you, Mr. President, and Germany on your assumption of the presidency this month, and Ambassador De La Sablière and France on its highly successful presidency last month. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary Guéhenno and you, Mr. President, for briefing us on the results of the Berlin conference and on the steps ahead for Afghanistan's future.

In January, the Philippines supported the idea proposed by you, Mr. President, to regenerate the political and financial support necessary to further the political and economic transition of Afghanistan as envisaged by the Bonn process. We now welcome the

fruits of the Berlin conference, which generated renewed commitment on the part of the international community to assist in the recovery and the development of Afghanistan. That conference was indeed an opportune time to regenerate the process. In that regard, we fully support the presidential statement endorsing the Berlin declaration.

We are all aware not only of the significant strides that the Government of President Karzai and the Afghan people have made to achieve the goal of a democratic, stable and functioning multi-ethnic society, but also of the challenges that have to be overcome to achieve that goal.

The political process in Afghanistan is well on its way to significant development. The world commended the political maturity exhibited by the Constitutional Loya Jirga in adopting the Constitution, which lays the foundation for a democratically elected Government and parliament. The lynchpin for the establishment of a democratically elected Government will be the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held this September, as announced by President Karzai.

A credible, fully participatory election process will be critical to the full recognition of the Government that will be installed. Thus it is crucial that a robust security presence within both the registration and the election processes is assured. The necessary security could be provided by strengthening the Afghan army and police forces. We note in that regard the progress report that the United States provided us this morning. That may not be sufficient, however. The establishment of more provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in critical areas controlled by warlords and the expansion of the operations of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) outside Kabul and other major cities will be important. The practice of sending soldiers to stay in villages and towns could give them a deeper understanding of the local people, and eventually they might win the cooperation of local warlords and villagers.

A sizeable part of the political challenge would be overcome if security of the electoral process could be assured. A fully representative Government installed through a credible democratic process would go a long way in the effective governance of the entire country in the future.

My delegation believes that full implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme scheduled to be completed before the elections in September would contribute considerably to the security and credibility of the elections. Given the factional power in Afghanistan, greater effort to deal with local disputes must be exerted, as those local disputes produce an environment of insecurity that undermines the Afghanistan Transitional Administration in Kabul and weakens the central Government. Local dispute resolution mechanisms must be developed and community-based reconciliation must be promoted.

Another factor destabilizing the political process is the serious problem of extensive poppy cultivation and all its consequences in drug production and drug trade. We welcome the steps being undertaken by Afghanistan together with its neighbours, as incorporated in the recent declaration to fight drugs, and the assistance being extended by other countries to develop viable economic alternatives to poppy cultivation. The International Monetary Fund says that at least 40 per cent of the economy of Afghanistan is illicit. Without an economy to provide legal income, eradicating the sole livelihood further undermines Afghanistan's political and economic future. Thus we share Pakistan's view on the need for Afghanistan to integrate its economy into the economies of the neighbouring subregions.

The international community, through the United Nations, has been a consistent partner of the Transitional Government of President Karzai in facing challenges throughout the implementation of the Bonn process. The Berlin conference furthers that partnership. The readiness with which the international community responded in Berlin is indeed an encouraging sign that the international community is not wavering in its support for Afghanistan. For its part, the Philippines remains committed to assist Afghanistan in its reconstruction efforts through training the Afghan people in health care, securing potable water and sanitation, agriculture and irrigation and civil and transport engineering.

The journey of reconstruction and development of Afghanistan is like a bicycle ride: you must pedal, otherwise you fall. After the Berlin conference, with the sustained help of the international community, Afghans themselves must pedal through their own political and economic recovery. National ownership of the process remains a crucial element of any political and economic reconstruction.

The President: I thank the representative of the Philippines for his kind words addressed to my delegation and Government.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I wish to express our satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Council for the month of April and to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador De La Sablière and his team for the remarkable work accomplished by the Council presidency in the month of March.

I also wish to thank you, Sir, for the very useful information you have just provided us on the very encouraging results of the Berlin international conference on Afghanistan. We have also listened closely to Mr. Guéhenno's briefing, and we are grateful to him for it.

The ongoing laudable efforts of the new political Afghan leadership undertaken since 2001 to ensure vigorous implementation of the Bonn Agreement deserve the international community's support. The positive results emerging from the Berlin conference are a tribute to Germany, the United Nations and many donor countries. We particularly welcome the multiyear nature of the pledges made by the donor countries on that occasion, which will make it possible to sustain the momentum of the excellent progress under way in Afghanistan.

We are convinced that the Transitional Afghan Government, which we congratulate for its honourable efforts, will find, in soliciting the international community, genuine encouragement to restore stability and promote sustainable development in Afghanistan.

We commend the work plan endorsed at the conference, which establishes a clear perspective on channelling energy and creating the synergy necessary to maximize the impact of diverse support that will benefit Afghanistan. That plan has opened a long-term field of work that requires momentum sustained by consistent and coordinated follow-up action.

President Karzai's decision to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in September, instead of June, 2004 is a responsible choice. We welcome it, and we urge the international community to support preparation of that electoral process and to help create the necessary transparent security conditions to confer the requisite credibility on the electoral process. The Afghan Government therefore has a major responsibility in terms of disarming armed groups to substantially improve the security situation. The issue of disarmament is a prerequisite that must be addressed in order to hold credible elections accepted by all and to ensure the survival of the democratic political process. The fight against drugs, we believe, is a key challenge to be met to ensure the full reintegration of Afghanistan in the family of nations. That reintegration will not take place if the country's economy continues to be dominated by drug cultivation and trafficking, on which organized crime thrives. That is why we believe that the Transitional Government is correct in making a priority of its action and in putting its efforts into cooperation with neighbouring countries.

We support the draft presidential statement, introduced by Germany, and we are ready to work with all stakeholders to assist the Afghan people in continuing to pursue its path towards progress and stability.

The President: I thank the representative of Benin for the kind words addressed to my delegation and my Government.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation)(*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to see you, Sir, chairing the Council in April and are grateful to your predecessor, Ambassador De la Sablière of France, for his successful guidance of our work last month. My delegation joins in the statements of gratitude made by other delegations to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and to you, Sir, for the detailed briefing you provided on the outcome of the Berlin conference. We are grateful to the German Government for its tremendous contribution to that undertaking.

The Russian Federation welcomes the outcome of the international conference on Afghanistan, including the final declaration adopted by it. We believe that that conference was an important and timely step. Russia had consistently advocated convening the conference because it believed that it was necessary to appraise implementation of the Bonn road map and to agree upon further steps by the international community to reaffirm its policy to rebuild Afghanistan, under United Nations auspices, as a peaceful, independent and neutral State, living in harmony with its neighbours and the rest of the world. In our view, the Berlin conference has fulfilled that aim.

At the same time, despite the outright successes that have been achieved in the peaceful rebuilding of

Afghanistan, in consolidating central authority and in reforming the security sector, there continues to be serious concern with respect to a number of domestic and external threats. Russia is concerned with the growing subversive activities of the Taliban and other extremist forces. Clearly, these forces are seeking to plunge the country into bloody inter-ethnic enmity and to prevent the holding of the forthcoming general elections in the country. We also observe that former Taliban officials are seeking to make their way into the Government in order to undermine the basis of the new Afghan nationhood from within.

Serious concern is also posed to neighbouring States by the threat of extremist elements entrenched in Afghanistan. The recent tragic events in Uzbekistan reaffirm that success in fighting extremism and terrorism is possible only on the basis of a unified anti-terrorist coalition that needs to be universal in scope. There is an additional threat that is related to drugs, since drug trafficking in particular provides the financial underpinning for anti-Government forces and remnants of terrorist organizations. We support the range of measures being undertaken by the Afghan Transitional Administration, within the framework of its national programme, aimed at destroying opium and poppy crops and the infrastructure for the production of heroin.

At the same time, it can be observed that the drug flows from Afghanistan are rising. We have seen that drug couriers are using Russian territory as a transit corridor, primarily into the European States. There is growing trafficking of Afghan drugs within the country as well. That is why we believe that it is necessary to take additional effective measures, to closeoff routes for illegal distribution of drugs from Afghanistan to neighbouring countries and to establish reliable security belts along the Afghan border.

That kind of approach has been set forth in the Declaration on Counter-Narcotics, adopted in Berlin by Afghanistan and its neighbours. It is in keeping with previous decisions of the Security Council. It needs to be implemented in practice with the participation of the Afghans themselves, neighbouring States, the International Security Assistance Force, coalition forces and United Nations specialized agencies.

At the Tokyo donor conference, Russia did not make specific pledges. In the period that has just elapsed, we provided to Afghanistan assistance totalling approximately $170 million. We are prepared to increase such assistance once there has been a settlement to the problem of the Afghan debt. Russia is seeking to resolve this problem under most favourable terms for Afghanistan. That would pave the way to converting the restructured debt into investments and would also create the conditions for direct economic assistance and for funding joint Russian-Afghan projects out of Russia's budget.

We anticipate that once simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections have been held in Afghanistan an effective Government, one that will bring closure to this transition phase, will have been created. Clearly, this will pose new challenges to the United Nations and to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We stand ready to consider proposals from the Secretary-General in this regard and anticipate that the Afghan leadership will continue to pursue its policy of close cooperation with the international community.

We support the draft statement proposed by experts for the Security Council presidential statement on the outcome of this meeting.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to my delegation and my Government.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): A welcome to you in the chair, Mr. President, and our thanks to the French delegation for their services in the presidency last month. We are also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for another good briefing.

Ambassador Ryan will shortly be making a statement on behalf of the European Union, as the Irish presidency and we fully subscribe to it. Many good points have already been made this morning. I would therefore like to address only a limited number of points — three in fact: the outcome of the Berlin conference, security and drugs.

Many others have expressed their gratitude to your Government, Mr. President, for their organization and leadership of the Berlin conference and I would like to associate the United Kingdom with those expressions. It was a conference that successfully reaffirmed the international community's commitment to Afghanistan at a moment when this was needed. We welcome the announcement of elections in September

and the challenging targets set by the Berlin work plan on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

The Conference also sent a needed message of renewed commitment for reconstruction. The money pledged over the next three years is substantial. The money pledged for elections is important, but, as Mr. Guéhenno has reminded us, not yet sufficient.

For my Government's part, we have raised our Tokyo pledge from £200 million to £500 million — roughly $900 million — over five years. We have contributed £10.5 million — roughly $19 million — to UNAMA's preparations for elections. This represents a substantial portion of the $68 million so far pledged. We have also contributed some £70 million — roughly $125 million — over three years towards counter-narcotics and £52 million — roughly $95 million — over three years towards security sector reform. Clearly, what others can do in further contributions will be welcome.

Money is not the whole story, however. The real challenge now is implementation using that money. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration need to happen before the election and to get going quickly. As Mr. Guéhenno has reminded us, security remains critical for continued progress. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the provincial reconstruction teams do need to be properly resourced and we need to encourage partners to continue to look at ways of contributing to the security effort, whether through the provincial reconstruction teams or through troop contributions to ISAF.

In addition to the provincial reconstruction team that the United Kingdom leads in Mazar-e-Sharif, my Government has offered to lead a second provincial reconstruction team at Meymaneh and to establish the forward support base for ISAF's expansion to the North of the country.

Lastly, I wish to say a word on the picture on drugs. Clearly, successfully tackling the drugs issue is also going to be critical to Afghanistan's future. It is going to take a long-term, sustainable approach and it is going to require others to get more involved. The United Kingdom, as lead nation, very much welcomes the endorsement by the Berlin conference of the Afghan-led national drug-control strategy and the action plans stemming from the February international counter-narcotics conference. Like all other speakers, I think, we, of course, also welcome the signing by Afghanistan and its neighbours of the Berlin declaration on counter-narcotics. Afghans, with the United Kingdom, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other international assistance, are now focusing on implementation of the strategy. Our top priority is to urge donors to commit to specific activity within the action plans.

Like others, we also support and welcome the presidential statement to be delivered at the end of this meeting.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to my delegation and my Government.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by thanking all those who have addressed kind words to me and the French delegation.

I also wish to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his briefing, to which we listened with great interest. My delegation associates itself with the statement to be made by the presidency of the European Union.

I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to convey our appreciation for the role played by Germany in providing support for Afghanistan. The Berlin conference was a success which we welcome. I believe that this is an important moment, because the conference demonstrated the readiness of the international community to help the Afghan people over the long term. It was an important moment, too, because of the announcement of the dates for presidential and legislative elections. My country welcomes that development and hopes that the simultaneous elections will promote the essential political dynamic. This is also an important time because of the commitment undertaken by the Afghan authorities to undertaking reform. We pay tribute to the work of President Karzai in that regard.

It was also an important occasion because of the work done at the margins of the conference, in particular the agreement — mentioned by all delegations and by you, Sir — to increase cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours in the anti-narcotics campaign. Not only Afghanistan and the region, but the countries of Europe as well, are threatened by poppy cultivation. We must lay the foundations for a sustainable economy in Afghanistan by finding alternatives to opium production and we

must take the appropriate path to ensure Afghanistan's economic future.

We must now focus all our efforts on the common political objective and priority of the proper conduct of elections. I share the view of Mr. Guéhenno, who in that context stressed the importance of security issues. In that regard, France will strengthen its own commitment to making the country safe and will continue, together with the United States and other partners, to assist in the establishment of a stable and multi-ethnic Afghan National Army. Following the training of three battalions, we are now completing the training of more than 600 army officers, after which we will initiate the training of instructors for the future military academy in Kabul. Furthermore, in addition to our contingent of 550 troops, we will increase our commitment to the International Security Assistance Force by assuming, together with Eurocorps, the command of that broadened force this summer. We will also continue actively to participate in Operation Enduring Freedom for the dismantling of the last Taliban networks, which are keeping Afghanistan in a state of fragility.

Still in the context of preparations for the elections, we fully support the statement of Jean-Marie Guéhenno on the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which to a great extent will depend, of course, on the commitment of the Afghan Government. I would add that, in connection with the elections, efforts to enhance the organization of those elections are important. In addition to its overall effort in 2004, France will provide additional assistance to the electoral process and will, inter alia, be responsible for the initial training of members of the electoral commission and contribute support for physical education. This effort is essential, as this is an opportunity for the electorate to take its destiny in hand and to build its own future. We hope that the elections will also prove to be an opportunity for considerable participation, including by Afghan women.

At a time when the international community wishes to express its resolve to help Afghanistan over the long term, I believe that it is appropriate to emphasize the quality of the work being done by the United Nations in that country. We express our fullest support for the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Jean Arnault.

In Afghanistan, the international community has acted in various complex modalities, but with good coordination and affirmation of Afghan sovereignty, which are essential. The United Nations is the locus of coordination where political orientation is established, which the various actors then implement on the ground.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the Afghan people, who have demonstrated their pride and dignity in exercising their recovered sovereignty. They have shown their sense of responsibility and their will to lead the Afghan nation along the path to peace. We, the international community, want to assure the Afghan people that we will remain at their side because it is together that we will succeed. I think that is the main message of the Berlin conference.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to my delegation and my Government.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency and by reiterating our full confidence in the leadership you will continue to provide to our Council during the month of April. I would also like to commend Ambassador De La Sablière for the very able manner in which he presided over the work of the Council during the month of March a very busy but successful month. Let me express my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for the substantive briefing he has provided to the Council and to you, Sir, for giving the Council a fuller account of the Berlin conference.

The rebuilding of a nation — any nation devastated and traumatized by a long war — is surely a very slow and complex process. It is only possible through strengthening international assistance, which is as an essential component of the process. We in Angola fully understand that. That is why we commend Germany and the other organizers for the successful outcome of the Berlin conference, which was, indeed, a remarkable step forward and a great opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the development of Afghanistan, its political future, security and the consolidation of national reconciliation. We join previous speakers in extending our delegation's full support to the outcome of the Berlin conference, especially the multi-year commitments made and the $8.2 billion that was pledged at the conference.

Since the Tokyo conference, the leadership and ownership of the reconstruction process have been progressively taken over by the Afghan authorities. My delegation welcomes that development, as it is essential for the sustainability of the entire process. Afghanistan has reached a crucial stage in the implementation of the Bonn process. By adopting the new Constitution, Afghans have laid the foundations for a State based on the rule of law and a just and lasting process of national reconciliation.

Afghan authorities have announced the holding of elections in September. We are pleased that the date of the elections has been set, and we welcome the readiness of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to assist in ensuring the conduct of the elections. On the other hand, we consider that further commitment by the international community is indispensable for the achievement of such an important goal.

However, despite impressive progress, much remains to be done in the political reconstruction and rehabilitation process of Afghanistan. As Mr. Guéhenno has reiterated before the Council, the security situation has been comprehensively analysed in the Security Council. The main factors contributing to the deterioration of Afghanistan security have been identified. In that connection, we stress the importance of Security Council resolution 1510 (2003) and NATO's commitment to expand ISAF's mission by establishing additional provincial reconstruction teams by the summer of 2004.

If the national State is to function effectively, it is essential that the central Government's authority is extended throughout the entire country. The presence of such forces, together with the national army, instils confidence among the local communities and provides support to the legitimate organs of the State. This is an essential requirement for providing stability throughout the country and for ensuring that an effective disarmament and demobilization process takes place. We are pleased that the international community has focused considerable attention on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. They are complex and require considerable financial resources.

The serious threat posed by the resurgence of extremist forces, including the Taliban, is another ongoing danger. This is a problem that we still need to deal with, along with the increased production and trafficking of illegal narcotics. The tasks before the Afghan Transitional Government and the international community — especially those countries more directly involved in countering drug trafficking — are enormous. They require immediate action to prevent poppy production from expanding and drug-related organized crime from taking root. In addition, those tasks require a long-term commitment to strengthening the rule of law and promoting livelihoods that provide an alternative to drugs. My delegation welcomes the Council's adoption of the counter-narcotics strategy, which has just been announced.

To conclude, I take this opportunity to commend once again the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Jean Arnault, as well as the personnel of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for their ongoing efforts to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan, and in particular for the role they have played in the constitutional and electoral processes. We are convinced that the attainment of a democratic, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is possible and is in the supreme interest of peace and international security.

Finally, I convey my full support for the draft presidential statement that has been submitted. I think that the Council will be sending a very important message by adopting that draft statement.

The President: I thank the representative of Angola for the kinds words he addressed to my delegation and my Government.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by expressing my appreciation to you for convening this important meeting on Afghanistan. I would also like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and you, Mr. President, for your comprehensive briefings on the outcome of the Berlin conference on Afghanistan that met on 31 March and 1 April 2004.

I am thankful to the delegations that expressed their satisfaction at the Berlin conference, and I am particularly grateful to those who appreciated the role of the Afghan people in preserving their independence. Moreover, I also extend, on behalf of my Government, sincere appreciation to the co-Chairs of the Berlin

conference — Germany, Japan and the United Nations — who provided excellent assistance to the Afghan Chairman in handling the proceedings of the conference. The Afghan people are grateful to the Government of Germany for hosting that historic meeting.

We were grateful to witness the participation in the conference of representatives of nearly 65 countries and international organizations. The goal of the conference was to assess the progress made in the past two years and to discuss the remaining challenges ahead in the context of the full implementation of the Bonn Agreement of 5 December 2001.

Since the conclusion of the Bonn Agreement, a genuine partnership between Afghanistan and the international community has proved that success is, in fact, possible. The various achievements of the past two years include the recent ratification of a new Constitution by the Loya Jirga on 4 January 2004, which provides the foundation for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, scheduled for September 2004, aiming at the completion of the transitional process.

The Berlin declaration on Afghanistan is indicative of the continued and sustained support of the international community aimed at ensuring stability, security and economic development in that country. We are grateful to all donor countries that have pledged support to Afghanistan's reconstruction and reform programmes, from the time of the Tokyo Conference of January 2002 to the conclusion of the Berlin conference. We are convinced that the pledges made at Berlin, amounting to approximately $8.2 billion for the March 2004 — March 2007 fiscal years, will keep Afghanistan on track towards development and stability.

With regard to security, we welcome the decision taken by NATO to expand the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by deploying five additional provincial reconstruction teams. We believe that the expansion of ISAF will strengthen security in preparation for the elections and help to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former combatants. In addition, the Afghan Government is currently engaged in the process of forming its National Army and Police Force, with the assistance of Afghanistan's friends.

On the issue of combating narcotics, the Berlin conference provided an opportunity for Afghanistan and its neighbours to reaffirm their commitment to work together to combat the problem. To that effect, we welcome the signing of the six-country accord by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of those countries.

My delegation has studied the statement that you, Sir, drafted, in your capacity as President of the Security Council, and we find it quite satisfactory.

The successful outcome of the Berlin conference has been welcomed by the Afghan people.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Afghanistan's full commitment to meeting the guidelines of the Bonn Agreement of 2001, in partnership with the international community. With international assistance we can rebuild Afghanistan and create conditions of peace, security and stability in the country and in our region.

The President: I thank the representative of Afghanistan for the kind words he addressed to my delegation and to my Government.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Ireland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I should like also to compliment Ambassador de La Sablière and the French delegation for a very effective presidency during the month of March.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia; the candidate countries — Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro; and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is grateful for the opportunity today to review the outcome of last week's conference in Berlin — "Afghanistan and the international community: a partnership for the

future" — and looks forward to Afghanistan's development from this point on.

Since the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, there have been many significant and positive developments in Afghanistan which have confirmed the resolve of the Afghan people to determine freely their own political future.

The Berlin conference held last week was a very clear demonstration of the unprecedented cooperation between the Transitional Administration, the United Nations and the international community in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. The work plan presented by President Karzai in Berlin will ensure that a functioning democracy is the only way ahead for Afghanistan.

The European Union greatly values the commitment of the United Nations and of individual nations to assisting Afghanistan in reconstruction and security sector reform. The contribution made by non-governmental civil society and humanitarian organizations is also vital.

The European Union, for its own part, has been, and will continue to be, one of the major partners and donors backing Afghanistan's reconstruction. There is much that the European Union and its member States are doing to help deliver those goals; it would take too long to review all of those efforts this morning. However, it is worth noting, as an indication of our commitment to Afghanistan, that the combined contributions for 2004 from the European Commission and the Union's member States total some 700 million euros.

The provision of security remains absolutely critical to everything the Afghan Transitional Administration and its international partners are trying to achieve. The expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is a demonstration of the international community's commitment to Afghanistan and will play a key role in assisting the Transitional Administration in providing security for the electoral process. Individual EU member States continue to make very significant commitments to providing for Afghanistan's security through participation in ISAF and provincial reconstruction teams, as well as serving alongside their allies under Operation Enduring Freedom. The sacrifices that have been made, both by Afghans and non-Afghans, are not forgotten.

The people of Afghanistan, however, also experience insecurity as a result of weak rule of law; the absence of an effective national police force and army; and the spread of opium production, which fuels crime and corruption. Afghanistan's efforts, in partnership with lead nations, to address these issues must be supported by the entire international community.

With the approval of the Constitution by the Constitutional Loya Jirga, the people of Afghanistan have taken the reins of their own political destiny. The men and women of Afghanistan, of whatever ethnic or regional identity, may now aspire to live in a society governed by the principles of freedom, justice and democracy.

The election and formation of a fully representative Government should be a priority for all parties in Afghanistan. In this regard, the announcement by President Karzai in Berlin that direct presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in September this year is a very positive development. The European Union will endeavour, with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Afghan Transitional Administration, to ensure that the elections can be held in accordance with the principles agreed at the 2001 Bonn conference. Efforts to develop Afghan civil society and a free media are an important part of this undertaking.

The European Union firmly believes in the protection and promotion of human rights, especially in relation to women and children, and in this regard welcomes the Afghan Transitional Administration's commitment to meet its obligations under international human rights law, as well as the progress made to date. The European Union commends the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in carrying out its mandate, despite the difficult environment in which it operates. It is important to ensure that the Commission remains independent, with proper financial and political support, and that its mandate is clearly articulated in law.

The European Union urges the Afghan Transitional Administration and future Governments to enable the full participation of women and girls in Afghanistan's civil, cultural, economic and political life, and we emphasize their responsibility to ensure the full implementation of the Constitution's provisions on human rights. The European Union will continue to

encourage and support efforts in Afghanistan to promote a society in which the human rights of all are fully respected.

In the past two years, Afghanistan has made great progress. While many challenges remain to be overcome — and their complexity may seem daunting — the European Union believes that the people of Afghanistan have the courage and determination necessary to overcome them. They can rely on the support of the European Union, its member States and the entire international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Ireland for his kind words addressed to my delegation and my Government.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): The international conference on Afghanistan held at Berlin on 31 March and 1 April reaffirmed the strong commitment of the international community to the Afghan people, with ministerial-level participation from many countries, despite the concern previously expressed about the shift of international attention from Afghanistan to other issues, such as Iraq. Japan, for its part, announced its readiness to extend further grant assistance amounting to $400 million over the coming two years, which brings Japan's contributions since September 2001 to over $1 billion. The total commitment by the donor community at the conference for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan amounts to $8.2 billion over the next three years.

As one of the conference co-Chairs, Japan warmly welcomes that outcome and expresses its gratitude to the Government of Germany for having hosted the conference.

Japan has stressed from the beginning that the reinforcement of the political process, a seamless transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and reconstruction, and the establishment and nationwide expansion of security are closely interlinked and should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Japan also believes that it is particularly important to bring about human security, with the goal of achieving nation-building and society-building through the protection and empowerment of every individual in Afghanistan. From that perspective, we believe that the conference, which integrated the Bonn process for peace and security and the Tokyo process for reconstruction, was an important step towards the consolidation of peace in Afghanistan.

Acknowledging that success, I would like to point out three issues that need to be dealt with going forward. The first relates to the elections. The formal announcement by President Karzai of the organization of both presidential and parliamentary elections in September provided an opportunity for the conference to accelerate the preparation process even further. All necessary tasks should be expeditiously carried out in the coming months, including overcoming the delays in voter registration, preparing to provide overseas Afghans with voting opportunities and mobilizing resources that are necessary to successfully implement the elections. Japan is resolved to extend assistance to ensure the success of the elections. As part of such assistance, it has already committed to providing $8.2 million for voter registration.

Secondly, with regard to security, we welcome the fact that the international community expressed its determination at the conference to assist further in the stabilization of the security situation, not only in Kabul and some provincial cities, but throughout the entire country, specifically through the deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, in order to restore security and to contribute to the country's reconstruction and development.

Japan, together with the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan, has been leading the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process and, as of mid-February, more than 5,500 ex-combatants have been disarmed and demobilized in four areas, including Kabul, in the pilot phase of the DDR programme.

The vigorous implementation and intensification of the programme ahead of the elections is a task of the greatest importance. We need to further strengthen our efforts to address such requirements as achieving complete disarmament in Kabul, disarming the commanders, accelerating reintegration programmes and creating job opportunities. We strongly urge all Afghan parties to make a full commitment to DDR, and reiterate our request to neighbouring countries and the international community to support the programme.

Thirdly, one of the most discussed issues at the conference was drug production and trafficking, and

the importance of taking effective countermeasures in this regard was fully recognized. Enforcement alone will not solve the problem. An integrated approach involving the simultaneous implementation of measures to introduce alternative crops and to promote DDR for the regional groups engaging in drug production is required. In this connection, the importance of agriculture and rural development cannot be overemphasized. Japan has been accelerating comprehensive community development projects in the provinces under the so-called Ogata Initiative in an attempt to achieve human security, focusing on reconstruction at the provincial community levels, and we believe such initiatives will also help to support the fight against drugs.

Substantive results have been achieved since the signing of the Bonn Agreement and the holding of the Tokyo conference, but much more must be done in order to conduct the elections — the last and most important milestone of the Bonn process. Furthermore, efforts towards rebuilding Afghanistan and achieving lasting peace should not come to a close with the forthcoming elections. The long-term commitment of the international community is essential. I would like to stress that it is of critical importance for the credibility of the United Nations that, once it has embarked upon a project, it continue its engagement in it until its objectives are attained. A lasting partnership between Afghanistan and the international community, as emphasized in the Berlin declaration, is what we should strive to sustain, in order to ensure a promising future for the country as a whole.

Mr. Nambiar (India): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on Germany's assumption of the presidency of the Council for April. I also congratulate Ambassador De La Sablière of France for his stewardship of the Council during March.

It has been 10 months since we last had an opportunity in the Security Council to consider the situation in Afghanistan. This open debate takes place in the wake of the international Afghanistan conference that concluded in Berlin on 1 April. We are grateful to you, Sir, for the briefing you have just provided, and also to Under-Secretary-General Guehenno for his briefing.

The Berlin conference was held at a critical juncture. It enabled the international community to take stock of the achievements since Bonn. More important, it provided an opportunity to plan further consolidation of these gains by facilitating elections, strengthening security and political institutions and providing the requisite base for Afghanistan's reconstruction and development. India, as a participant of the Berlin conference, welcomes its results and congratulates the four co-chairs — the United Nations, Afghanistan, Germany and Japan — for their role in securing this success.

The successful conclusion of the Constitutional Loya Jirga and the subsequent adoption of the new Constitution were milestones in the Bonn process. We congratulate the Transitional Government, led by President Karzai, on the progress achieved since the Bonn Agreement. We welcome the announcement by President Karzai to hold the presidential and parliamentary elections simultaneously in September this year.

After decades of conflict and destruction, it will take time and patience for a fully functioning democracy to take root in Afghanistan. Until then it has to be nurtured carefully. Consolidation and extension of central authority requires a broad-based governmental process, and the country must be free from outside interference.

The international community's approach to Afghanistan has to be realistic and must take into account the complexities and difficulties on the ground. Forward movement in the electoral exercise in Afghanistan would depend much upon progress in voter registration. A balance between speed and stability is essential for the success of the political process. Realism also demands a degree of flexibility in dealing with situations.

The Berlin declaration of 1 April highlighted the common resolve of the international community to defeat terrorists who undermine security and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. To objective observers of the situation in Afghanistan, it is evident that the peace and stabilization process there remains fragile. The biggest threat to stability in Afghanistan continues to emanate from terrorism, as currently manifested in the incidents of violence in the country, particularly in south and south-east Afghanistan. Therefore, defeat of the forces of terrorism and demolition of the infrastructure of terrorism must necessarily be the first priority.

The report of the Council's mission to Afghanistan in October and November 2003 (S/2003/1074) led by you, Mr. President, concluded that the three main sources of insecurity in Afghanistan were terrorism, factional fighting and drug production and trafficking. Under the subheading "Terrorism", the report also noted that

> "In the provinces of the south, south-east and east, insecurity is greatly exacerbated by terrorist attacks from suspected members of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and supporters of Gulbudin Hekmatyar." (*S/2003/1074, para. 22*)

Unfortunately, the situation is no different today. Continuing terrorist attacks by regrouped Taliban and Al Qaeda elements constitute the primary source of insecurity in Afghanistan. These attacks are also aimed at obstructing delivery of reconstruction assistance. The assassination of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees international staff member Bettina Goislard in November last year and attacks against United Nations agencies led the Secretary-General to report to the Council on 30 December 2003 that "Attacks on international and national staff of the assistance community and officials of the central Government" had placed "much of the south and south-east of the country ... effectively off limits to the United Nations, the assistance community and central Government officials ..." (*S/2003/1212, paras. 6 and 7*).

In his current report of 19 March 2004, the Secretary-General states:

> "Insecurity in the country continues to follow a well-known pattern and has shown no signs of significant improvement". ... "Attacks by extremist elements on aid agencies, both national and international, and on government officials continue to occur, predominantly in the southern provinces". (*S/2004/230, para. 6*)

Despite the continuing threat assessment, the Secretary-General's latest report and the statement of the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, in his briefing to the Council on 24 March, made scant reference to security threats by Taliban or Al Qaeda terrorists, preferring to attribute such actions to "extremists". As the general membership is not privy to closed discussions between the Council and the Secretariat, we would like to understand the reasons for such downplaying of threats to Afghanistan from terrorist groups, particularly in the south and the south-east of the country.

Consideration of these recent reports of the United Nations Secretariat brings to mind a number of relevant questions. Is it the United Nations view that these groups no longer represent a threat to Afghanistan or are these reports and briefings in the Council the product of some kind of compromise? Or, did the absence of any reference to these organizations imply that the work of the Security Council 1267 Committee concerning the Taliban and Al Qaeda had achieved closure, at least in Afghanistan?

It will not be incorrect to say that the steady dilution of reporting on Afghanistan over the past year or so has not always been fully consistent with the position on the ground. In our view, the reports of the United Nations Secretariat must be objective, far more discerning and reflective of ground realities.

Incidents of violence reported in other parts of Afghanistan are also a matter of concern. However, it is our expectation that the political process will subsume these local pressures and interests. The success of the Constitutional Loya Jirga is a significant indicator in this direction. Leaders, with diverse interests, from all parts of the country, participated in the Constitutional Loya Jirga; they became part of it and ensured that it did not fail. A democratic political process in Afghanistan would absorb in its fold the varying interests, as indeed happens in all democracies throughout the world.

We agree that continued international presence is essential to discourage the resurgence of negative forces. However, long-term stabilization of the country requires the building up of national security institutions led by Afghans and entrenched in Afghanistan's ground realities.

Unfortunately, this process has not moved so far at the desired pace. India remains ready to contribute to rebuilding Afghan security institutions, in whichever way possible, in coordination with our Afghan and international partners.

The steady rise in drug production and trafficking is a matter of serious concern. Apart from undermining the process of political and economic reconstruction in Afghanistan, this has dangerous repercussions for the region and beyond. The international community must act quickly to curb opium cultivation by providing

Afghan farmers with economically viable and sustainable alternatives.

In view of our historical ties of friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan and the Afghan people, India has made a substantial contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction effort. Despite our constraints and the fact that we are not a traditional donor, our present commitment adds up to $284 million, including 1 million tons of wheat aid. With the implementation of a number of planned projects, India's financial commitments for Afghanistan's reconstruction would amount to around $400 million.

In partnership with the Afghan Government, India has undertaken projects in a number of sectors. We also have an extensive programme to rebuild Afghanistan's institutional capacity. Our projects have reached out to people in virtually all parts of the country.

Our commitment of one million tons of wheat aid has been operationalized and about one million Afghan school children have been receiving a package of 100 grams of biscuits every day since the programme began in November 2002. We are told this has contributed to the back-to-school programme.

We have also attempted to encourage trade and investment activity that would lead to enhanced income generation in Afghanistan. In the coming period, we expect to focus more on infrastructure projects, such as work on the Zaranj-Delaram road, the Salma Dam Project in the Province of Herat, and the construction of a new parliament building and of the double circuit transmission line from Put-e-Khumri to Kabul.

India's programme of economic assistance in Afghanistan is guided by Afghan priorities and ownership. Our relations are bilateral and direct. The underlying principle remains our desire to see Afghanistan emerge as strong, united, independent and prosperous. We wish to see full consolidation of authority by the central Government. Our efforts in reconstruction and other sectors would continue to be directed towards these ends.

The Berlin conference has correctly been referred to as a milestone in Afghanistan's peace process. Its success lay in galvanizing international support for Afghanistan's political, electoral, economic and financial evolution into an independent, responsible and contributing member of the international community. It is therefore all the more important that the expressions of support made at Berlin be given practical dimension in the critical months ahead.

The President: I thank the representative of India for the kind words addressed to my delegation and to my Government. I invite him to resume the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno: Let me say how pleased we are that so many delegations have stressed the importance of security for Afghanistan. Security has many facets in Afghanistan, and I would like to clarify that, indeed, the threats of Al Qaeda and the Taliban remain a great source of concern. We have seen the effects of such threats on our staff. I would like to clarify that when we talk about extremist elements, we indeed refer to such elements as Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

It is unfortunately also clear that security in Afghanistan has many facets and that dealing with the question of factionalism, to which I referred again in today's briefing, is also important for the stabilization of the country. The unfortunate events in Herat, to which I referred, are an illustration of the dangers of factionalism for peaceful elections.

I would like to conclude, in that respect, on the importance of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), without which the strength of Afghanistan will be considerably undermined. So I think that if we want to consolidate security in Afghanistan, we have to work on several fronts. The major contribution made by Operation Enduring Freedom in the fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban is to be commended. The efforts of the international community to build the Afghan national army are important. The role of the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in stabilizing the region is essential. The contribution of Japan and other countries to DDR is vital to the stability of Afghanistan.

The President: After consultation among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council welcomes the results of the Berlin conference on Afghanistan, held on 31 March and 1 April 2004, co-chaired by the United Nations, Afghanistan, Germany and

Japan. The Council thanks Afghanistan and Germany for jointly hosting this event, an important milestone on the way to a secure, stable, free, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan.

"The Council expresses its full support for the commitment of Afghanistan and the international community to successfully complete the implementation of the Bonn Agreement and to continue the transition process in Afghanistan through a lasting partnership, thus reflecting a model for a common endeavor of the international community in its fight against terrorism.

"The Security Council endorses the Berlin declaration and stresses the relevance of the work plan of the Afghan Government, the progress report and the Berlin declaration on Counter-Narcotics, annexed to the Berlin Declaration, and welcomes the significant financial multiyear commitments made by the international donor community.

"The Security Council in particular expresses full support for the commitment by the Government of Afghanistan to pursue the necessary reform steps and actions as outlined in the work plan.

"The Security Council welcomes the announcement of President Karzai to hold direct presidential and parliamentary elections by September of this year. The Council stresses the importance of a secure environment for free, fair and credible democratic elections, and that to this end further efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and of the international community are needed.

"The Security Council welcomes in this regard the decision taken by the President of Afghanistan to implement vigorously the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, in particular to intensify it ahead of the 2004 elections, and to continue the formation of the Afghan national army and the national police.

"The Council also acknowledges the commitment by NATO to expand the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) by establishing five additional provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) by summer 2004 and further PRTs thereafter, as well as the readiness of ISAF and the Operation Enduring Freedom to assist in securing the conduct of elections.

"The Security Council welcomes the commitments totalling $8.2 billion for the fiscal years March 2004 to March 2007 made by participants at the Berlin conference for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan and stresses the importance, with increasing absorption capacity, for a growing share of this assistance to be channeled through the Afghan budget as direct budget support or as contributions to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and to the Law and Order Trust Fund.

"The Security Council stresses that opium poppy cultivation, drug production and trafficking pose a serious threat to the rule of law and development in Afghanistan as well as to international security, and that therefore Afghanistan and the international community shall endeavor to reduce and eventually eliminate this threat, including through the development of economic alternatives. The Council reiterates the importance of increased cooperation among neighbouring States and countries along trafficking routes to strengthen anti-narcotic controls.

"The Security Council takes note of the appeal of President Karzai at the Berlin Conference for additionally needed international support in countering narcotics. The Council refers in this context to the necessary implementation of the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy and the counter-narcotics action plans in the areas of law enforcement, judicial reform, alternative livelihoods, demand reduction and public awareness. The Security Council calls upon Member States to support the implementation of these action plans. Afghanistan needs both human and financial resources to tackle this problem.

"The Security Council welcomes in particular the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics within the framework of the Kabul Good-neighbourly Relations Declaration, signed by Afghanistan and its neighbours, as well as the

planned Conference on Regional Police Cooperation to be held in Doha on 18 and 19 May.

"The Security Council invites the Secretary-General to include in his future reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan, in addition to the information on implementation of the Bonn Agreement, chapters on progress achieved in the implementation of the Berlin declaration, the work plan of the Afghan Government and in the promotion of regional and international cooperation with Afghanistan.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for the actions taken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and reiterates the central and impartial role of the United Nations in the international efforts to assist the Afghan people in consolidating peace in Afghanistan and rebuilding their country.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2004/9.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.